

Board of Accountancy response to the Economic Impact Analysis prepared by DPB

Continuing Professional Education (CPE) is defined in regulation, to mean:

“an integral part of the lifelong learning required to provide competent services to the public; the formal set of activities that enables accounting professionals to maintain and increase their professional competence.”

Any coursework taken by a CPA to meet the Board’s CPE requirements shall be constructed in a manner to meet the Board’s definition of CPE. Any coursework that does not meet the Board’s definition is not acceptable.

Virginia CPAs and CPA firms spend thousands of dollars every year on CPE. There are many CPE training providers operating throughout the United States. A large percentage of CPE providers are registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy's (NASBA) Regulatory Compliance Services Division. This service offers several programs that assist state boards including Virginia and their licensees by determining high quality CPE providers. The National Registry of CPE Sponsors (Registry) lists organizations that provide high quality CPE in accordance with nationally recognized standards. The Quality Assurance Service (QAS) recognizes organizations that provide self-study CPE courses of the highest caliber. Both programs were developed in response to requests from state boards including Virginia. When contacted by training providers who are designing CPE training programs, the Board refers callers to NASBA for information on the effective design and construction of CPE programs. The training provider is not required to register with NASBA but may avail themselves of the program standards.

The Board voted to repeal the Continuing Professional Education Sponsor Registration Rules and Regulations in 1999. The Board was advised that the regulations had been repealed in October 1999. At that time, the application and renewal process for sponsors was discontinued. As mentioned in the EIA, the Board conducts a monthly CPE compliance audit of 30-40 CPAs. After nearly four (4) years, no CPE courses have been identified in the audit that do not comply strictly with the Board’s definition of CPE. The Board believes that the marketplace will weed out those CPE sponsors that do not meet the requirements to provide the type of educational structure necessary for a relevant learning experience.

During the last four (4) years, CPAs and CPA firms in Virginia have had greater flexibility in their selection of CPE and CPE providers. This change has allowed a more tailored approach for the regulants and the Board believes that the result has been enhanced services to the citizens of Virginia. Those enhanced services have cost less as a result of the elimination of the unnecessary requirement to register as a Board approved CPE sponsor.